

Ephesians 1D

- For the last two weeks I addressed Paul's comments on God choosing us
 - And I knew it was (pre)destined to be controversial
 - But the focus on that word also caused us to step away from the big picture of Paul's teaching in chapter 1
 - So today, we're going to set that subject matter aside for a time
 - Because we need to consider other, equally important concepts that Paul raises next
 - So let's remember where we've been going in this chapter
 - Paul is explaining how God has prepared a glorious future for believers
 - He has blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places
 - These blessings are far greater than those to be found here in this life,
 - Furthermore, the Lord has obtained them for us
 - We don't earn them, we don't secure them, we simply receive them
 - Then I said Paul goes forward to explain how each member of the Godhead works to assure us of these blessings
 - Over the past two weeks, we've been studying the role of the Father specifically
 - And in summary, Paul taught that the Father's role in assuring us a place in the Son's inheritance was choosing us
 - The Father chose to adopt us, predestining us to our place in the family of God
 - Obviously, the Father's role was pretty significant
 - Because without His decision in our favor, nothing else in the plan could work for us

- So our assurance of heavenly glory, heavenly blessings, heavenly inheritance began with the Father's choice
- But it didn't end there...

[Eph. 1:7](#) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

[Eph. 1:8](#) which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

[Eph. 1:9](#) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

[Eph. 1:10](#) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

[Eph. 1:11](#) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

[Eph. 1:12](#) to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

- Paul begins v.7 with "in Him"
 - Since we're dropping into the middle of this passage, we have to glance back up the page to determine who the "Him" is in this case
 - Notice the final word at the end of v.6 is "the Beloved," which clearly refers to the Son
 - The Son is the One beloved by the Father, therefore, in Him is a reference to in Christ
 - That tells us that Paul is now moving on to explain Jesus' role in securing our eternal future
 - Of course, any discussion of Christ's work on our behalf must begin with His work in dying in our place on the cross to cleanse us from our sins
 - And that's exactly where Paul starts
 - Paul says in Christ we have redemption through His blood
 - The Greek word Paul uses translated redemption is (*apolytrosis*), which means to buy back a slave and set him free
 - We were slaves, but Jesus paid the ransom to set us free
- Redemption or to be ransomed is a common way the New Testament describes our salvation

- Because in truth, we each began our life as slaves, in bondage to a master

[Heb. 2:14](#) Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

[Heb. 2:15](#) and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

- Hebrews tells us every human being enters life a slave to sin and to sin's penalty, eternal death
- We live with that sentence hanging over our head because Adam chose to sin
- Adam was humanity's representative, and when he fell he cast humanity's lot in with Satan's
- Spiritually-speaking, he traded innocence for slavery
- Hebrews says the devil became our master, controlling us through a fear of death
 - Imagine you were in a gang of thieves and murderers
 - You were guilty of many crimes and you knew that if you sought mercy from the police, you would be condemned for your crimes
 - The only friend you have is the gang leader
- But he's no friend at all
 - He seeks only to cause more death, destruction and chaos
 - So he controls you through fear, knowing you can't escape your circumstances since you're a criminal just like him
 - You're stuck...you're a slave to the gang leader, living in fear of the law and without hope of a rescue
- Into those circumstances, Christ stepped in and paid your ransom and set you free from the fear of death that allowed the enemy to enslave you
 - Paul says in v.7 that the price Christ paid for you was His blood
 - Since your crimes (i.e., your sin) deserved death, the only payment that Christ could make was a death

- He couldn't bargain the price lower, for the Father set the price in the Garden
- He had to spill His lifeblood, to do into death to pay the price for your sin
- That payment bought you out of slavery permitting the Father to be just as He forgave your sins on the cross
 - We know the Father chose us to be adopted as a child, but that decision by itself would have been unjust without a payment for sin
 - If you and your gang were arrested and taken to court for judgment of your crimes, a righteous judge couldn't let you go free without just cause
 - The judge would need just cause for acquitting you
 - Similarly, the Father needs just cause to acquit you and bring you into the family of God
- Paul says that in Christ was the One Who gave the Father just cause to forgive us of our crimes, our transgressions
 - Jesus's ransom payment was an acceptable substitute for your debt

Rom. 5:15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Rom. 5:16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

- Paul compares Christ's act on the cross to Adam's act in the Garden
- Adam's decision that plunged many into sin and judgment
- But Christ's poured out His life as a gift, so that by that gift of grace many can be ransomed

- So now we extend our understanding of the word grace in scripture
 - Last week we said that grace is not an offer of salvation but is the decision of the Father to include us in His plan of adoption
 - Grace is the finished work of God to save us while we were yet sinners and enemies of God
 - Before we knew we needed a Savior He had already chosen us for salvation
 - But now Paul says God's grace (i.e., His unmerited favor toward us) goes even farther
 - God's favor is evident in that He would put His own Son on the cross
 - It's one thing to say God's grace chose to grant us mercy and rescue us from our predicament
 - But's another thing to say that God's choosing us required His Son die for us
 - God's grace is the Father choosing us, and God's grace is the Son dying for us
- But the grace of God in the Son doesn't end there even
 - Paul says the grace of God in the Son is lavished upon us in yet another way
 - Remember, vs.3-14 is a single sentence in the Greek language, so we have to cut it into digestible pieces
 - Let's cut the next piece from the middle of v.8 through to the middle of v.10
 - That section reads...

[Eph. 1:8](#) ...In all wisdom and insight

[Eph. 1:9](#) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

[Eph. 1:10](#) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times...

- Here we have the second way in which we receive grace in Jesus Christ
 - Jesus Christ is our all source for all wisdom and insight

- As you can probably tell, Paul is referring to Jesus Christ as the revealed word of God
- God's grace goes a step further in providing all spiritual wisdom to the believer through the Word
- And the Lord's grace brings us all spiritual insight, which is different than wisdom
- The wisdom God grants us through His word is spiritual truth, spiritual realities of who God is, Who we are and what the future holds
 - It's knowledge we can know only if God chooses to reveal it to us
 - We're talking about spiritual truth that lies outside the ability of human beings to discover on their own
 - No amount of searching, philosophizing, study or observation could every discover God truly much less understand all that He has planned for Creation
- Notice in v.9 Paul says Christ makes known to us the mystery of His will
 - Truly, God's will is a mystery to fallen mankind
 - As Paul says in 1Cor

1Cor. 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1Cor. 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

- Since mankind can't find spiritual wisdom, God must reveal Himself to us
 - Only by the kind intention, which the Father purposed to achieve in Christ, can we understand God
 - By His grace extended to believers, He gives us His word in His Son
 - Jesus Christ taught the disciples who then taught us
 - But even before that, Christ was speaking to men through the prophets
 - He is the Word, Who gives us an understanding of the Father

- Notice also this understanding is *only* for the believer, as a matter of God's grace
 - Those who aren't chosen to receive grace do not receive the the wisdom of God either
 - In fact, the ability to understand and appreciate the word of God is a sign of a person's salvation

[1Cor. 1:18](#) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

[1Cor. 1:19](#) For it is written,

**"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."**

- Paul says the word of God is utter foolishness to the unbeliever
 - It's literally impossible for the unbeliever to grasp what the Bible says in spiritual terms
 - Certainly, an unbeliever can read the words and pick up a degree of understanding
 - They can understand the story of Noah or Abraham or even Jesus to a degree, in a human sense
 - In the same way they can read Moby Dick or Tom Sawyer
- But the spiritual meaning of the text lies beyond their grasp
 - They can't see it for themselves no matter how long they search
 - And even if someone were to explain it to them, they will still reject it
 - This is exactly what happened when the Word Himself spoke scripture to the Pharisees who were not believing

[John 5:38](#) "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

[John 5:39](#) "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

[John 5:40](#) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

[John 5:41](#) "I do not receive glory from men;

[John 5:42](#) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

- Only those who are being saved by God can recognize the word of God as the power of God in our lives
 - And we hear it *because* the Son has given us the grace to do so
 - In the Bible, believers are often called the sheep of God
 - And Christ is our Good Shepherd
 - Using this analogy, Jesus explained why the Pharisees couldn't grasp the meaning of His words

[John 10:24](#) The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

[John 10:25](#) Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.

[John 10:26](#) "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

- So understanding the word of God is something uniquely available for God's sheep, those chosen of the Father for salvation
 - Which makes it all the more surprising how few believers take advantage of this grace made available in Christ
 - So many believers today and over the centuries have turned a blind eye to the scriptures
- Consider that these words we hold in our hands are the manifestation of the unmerited favor of a Holy God to His children
 - How much attention do these words deserve in our daily life?
 - Peter says

[2Pet. 1:2](#) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

[2Pet. 1:3](#) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- Peter says that *everything* that pertains to our life on earth and to our godliness is found in the true knowledge of Him Who called us
- Certainly, there are other sources of human knowledge, that is knowledge of the world we've constructed, of our history, science and the like

- Peter isn't denying those sources
- He's speaking of spiritual truths about life and pleasing God
- For the believer, the word of God is sufficient to bring us to where God wants us to be
- And yet so few Christians are placing the proper priority on the pursuit of that wisdom
 - Even those who give some time to Bible study do so sporadically
 - And only when that pursuit is convenient
 - I'm a firm believer you can't spend too much time in the word of God
- So I challenge you to up your game in this area of your life
 - God has extended His grace to you in the form of His word
 - Drink it in, take as much of it as you can get
 - As much as you value His grace in choosing you and in dying for you, then appreciate His grace in teaching you
 - Knowing that learning the word of God brings its own rewards
- Secondly, Paul says we have the grace of all insight from Christ
 - Insight refers to our appreciation of God's will for our life
 - It refers to knowing what Christ is calling us to do, how He wants us to live to please Him
 - Insight builds on wisdom, of course
 - As we come to understand spiritual truth we will be in a better position to understand Christ's will for us
 - When He asks us to sacrifice some pleasure in our life, the word of God explains why
 - When He calls us to endure persecution or trial, the word of God explain why it's important to persevere
 - If you don't study scripture, you can still hear from the Lord for that is grace by itself

- But without the counsel of His word, you may not understand why you should listen and obey
- And just like spiritual wisdom, spiritual insight is a foreign notion to an unbeliever
 - Have you ever told a person you knew was an unbeliever that Jesus told you something or is leading you to do something?
 - Doesn't that person give you the [RCA Victor dog look](#)?
 - They wonder if you're making it up, or maybe you're a little too zealous about your religion
 - That's another example of how the Lord distinguishes His children by His grace
 - He speaks to us by Christ and we hear Him
 - His voice won't be audible necessarily, and we won't always obey what we hear
 - But we do know what He says, as Jesus says

[John 10:27](#) "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

- That's insight, and it's another outpouring of God's grace
- In vs.8-9 Paul adds that having wisdom and insight are evidence that the Lord has lavished even more grace upon us
 - These things didn't have to be a part of God's plan in saving us
 - It's easy to take them for granted, as if they were inevitable
 - But Paul says our opportunity to understand spiritual truth and to know God's will in our life is grace upon grace
 - He could have just sent His Son and paid our ransom and left it at that
 - Eventually, we would have gone home to be with Christ
 - And in that moment we would have been given full spiritual wisdom and insight in a moment

[1Cor. 13:12](#) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

- But God's grace to us is greater than that, it overflows, it abounds, it is lavished upon us
 - He wants to teach us about Himself by His word to help us understand His ways
 - Because the Lord knows the more we know Him, the more will want to be like Him
 - So that as we live according to His word, he will lead us into godliness
 - And godliness will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness
- Finally, Paul say in v.10 that this grace is intended to be an administration suitable until the fullness of the times
 - The Greek word translated administration means under management
 - That is to say the grace of God in His word and in the revelation of His will are His appointed tools to manage us for a time
 - For as long as live in these earthly bodies and await the riches of our inheritance, we live under management of God's word
 - This administration will continue until the fullness or fulfillment of these times or until this age is closed
 - So God's extended grace upon grace to His adopted children
 - Even after He chose us and after His Son died for us, He gave us His word and the counsel of His will to manage our lives for this time
 - We're managed until we receive new bodies and our heavenly inheritance
 - And Paul says the wisdom and insight of Christ are suitable until the age concludes
 - The word suitable doesn't appear in the original Greek
 - A better way to phrase Paul's meaning would be "for the purpose of managing until the age's fulfillment"
- Today we studied two ways in which Jesus extends His grace to the believer

- His death paid a ransom to free you from your slavery to sin and granted you forgiveness for your sins
 - And His word gives you a knowledge of the God Who saved you
 - His grace allows you to know God's will for your life so that you may walk in a manner that pleases Him
- There are yet two more ways in which God has poured out His grace to us in His Son
 - We'll study those next week
 - Followed by the grace of God given in the word of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Spirit of God
 - As we said, it's grace upon grace from God
- One Bible scholar took time to count the many ways in which the Lord bestows His grace upon His children
 - He stopped counting at 33 ways
 - Certainly, 33 ways is a lot, but I don't know if his count was accurate or complete
 - It wouldn't surprise me if that count is actually infinite
 - And we've only begun to scratch the surface in knowing what God has done for us
- Are you taking advantage of all the grace God has extended to you?
 - Have you received Christ as Savior?
 - If so, have you taken His word to heart?
 - Do read it daily, study it intently, meditate on it earnestly and obey faithfully?
 - And do you consult His will prayerfully?
 - Do you seek His counsel? Do you slow down enough to give Him time to direct your steps? Are you sensitive to His leading?
 - Let's make our goal soaking in all the grace God has offered to His children, not wishing to miss any of it